THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (d) India's nuclear programmes are covered by the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, as well as by our various policy pronouncements from time to time and executive orders issued by the Prime Minister.

The recent neclear tests, as has been explained in the official statements made in Parliament, were intended to respond to our deteriorating security environment and were conducted in the supreme national interest.

हाइड्रोजन बम विस्फोट के बारे में संदेह

1274. **श्री जनेवर मिश्र:** क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि पोखरण में हुए हाइड्रोजन बम विस्फोट के बारे में कुछ स्वदेशी तथा कुछ विदेशी वैज्ञानिकों द्वारा उठाये गये सवालों तथा इसकी सफलता के बारे में उनके द्वारा प्रकट किये गये संदेहों का कोई संतोषजनक उत्तर सरकार नहीं दे पाई है;

(ख) क्या यह भी सच है कि वैज्ञानिक क्षेत्रों में यह अब भी कहा जा रहा है कि भारत का हाइड्रोजन बम परीक्षण सफल नहीं रहा है; और

(ग) यदि हां, तो सरकार द्वारा इस संबंध में क्या कदम उठाए जा रहे हैं?

विदेश मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्रीमती वसुन्धरा राजे): (क) जी, नहीं।

(ख) और (ग) विदेशी समाचार-पत्रों में प्रकाशित अवसरिक रिपोर्टों में 11 मई, 1998 को परीक्षित युक्तियों के कुल उत्पाद का वास्तविकता से कम मूल्यांकन किया गया और परिणाम स्वरूप यह शंका जाहिर की गई कि क्या भारत द्वारा हाइड्रोजन बम का परीक्षण सफलतापूर्वक किया गया है। परमाणु ऊर्जा विभाग ने कुछ विदेशी वैज्ञानिकों द्वारा व्यक्त इन शंकाओं का खंडन करने के लिए पर्याप्त वैज्ञानिक प्रमाण इक्ट्ठे कर लिए हैं। यह भी उल्लेखनीय है कि अन्य विदेशी वैज्ञानिकों द्वारा प्रकाशित ऐसे अन्य वैज्ञानिक प्रकाशन भी हैं जिनमें 11 मई के परीक्षणों के बारे में हमारे द्वारा सूचित कुल उत्पाद की पुष्टि की गई है। हाल ही के वैज्ञानिक शोध-पत्रों में, भाभा परमाणु अनुसंधान केन्द्र (बी ए आर सी) के वैज्ञानिकों ने कई भिन्न-भिन्न पद्धतियों को काम में लाकर विस्तृत विश्लेषण दिए हैं जिनमें निर्णायक रूप से यह बताया गया है कि 11 मई को पोखरण में किए गए विस्फोटों का कुल उत्पाद लगभग 60 किलोटन है, जोकि परीक्षणों के तुरन्त बाद हमारे द्वारा घोषित विभिन्न युक्तियों के उत्पादों के अनुरूप है। 11 मई को किए गए परीक्षणों में, 15 किलोटन की एक विखण्डन युक्ति, 45 किलोटन की एक तापनाभिकीय युक्ति (हाइड्रोजन बम) और एक सब-किलोटन युक्ति (एक किलोटन से कम) शामिल थी। दो और उप-किलोटन युक्तियों का परीक्षण 13 मई को किया गया। 11 तथा 13 मई को जिन पांच युक्तियों का परीक्षण किया गया था, वे सभी भौतिकी, पदार्थ-विज्ञान, अभियांत्रिकी तथा इलैक्ट्रॉनिकी के क्षेत्र में उपलब्ध वर्तमान ज्ञान पर आधारित थीं।

Exploitation of Beach Sand Minerals

1275. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal for adoption of a comprehensive policy seeking to promote and expand opportunities for value added exploitation of various beach sand minerals in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and at what stage the proposal is?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) and (b) Policy on Exploitation of Beach Sand Minerals in the country has been notified under Government of India (Department of Atomic Energy) Resolution No. 8/1(i)/97-PSU/1422 dated 06 October 1998. The salient features of the policy are summarised in the enclosed statement.

Statement

Summary Note on the Policy for Exploitation of Beach Sand Minerals

1 .India has large reserves of beach sand minerals in the coastal stretches around the country. Ilmenite is the largest constituent of the Indian beach sand deposits, others being rutile.

leucoxene, zircon, sillimanite, granet and monazite. The minerals other than garnet and sillimanite have been classified as "prescribed substance" under the Atomic Energy Act, 1962.

2. Under the Industrial Policy Resolution of 1991, the mining and production of minerals classified as "prescribed substances" is reserved for the public sector. However, the Policy Resolution also allows selective entry of the private sector in the industries so reserved, At present, the Indian Rare Earths Limited (IREL), a Government of India (Department of Atomic Energy) undertaking and Kerala Minerals & Metals Ltd. (KMML), a Government of Kerala undertaking are engaged in mining, production and processing of these minerals from the beach sand deposits at a few locations in Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Considering the growng demand for these minerals and/or their value-added products in the domestic as well as international markets and the potential available in the country, setting up of new plants for exploitation of the deposits in fresh locations would be in the interest of the country. Production of various value-added products of these minerals is, however, highly capital intensive and it may not be possible for only the PSUs (both Central and State owned) operating in this field to set up the new plants on their own. It is, therefore, necessary to allow the private sector to set up such Plants within the framework of some broad guidelines.

3. In view of the background explained above, Government of India has recently approved a policy to encourage further exploitation of these mineral deposits through a judicious mix of public and private sector participation (including foreign investment).

4(a) The activities in this field have been placed in three categories:

(i) Mining and mineral separation.

(ii) Value addition per se to the products of (i)

(iii) Integrated activities (comprising both (i) and (ii).

(b) Participation of wholly Indian owned companies will be permitted in all the above mentioned categories of activities, with or without joint venture with the Central or State Government (s) concerned or any existing or new Central/ State PSUs.

(c) Foreign direct investment, particularly with more advanced/latest technology *vis-a-vis* what is being used by the domestic entities currently operating in the field, will be permissible in pure value addition projects (category in para. 4(a) (ii), i.e., without mining and mineral separation) as well as integrated projects (category in para. 4(a) (iii), i.e., comprising both mining & mineral separation and value addition).

(c)(i) Upto seventy four percent (74%) foreign equity participation will be permissible in both pure value addition and integrated projects, provided the level of value addition is the maximum according to the prevailing international standards/levels of value addition to the products of mining and mineral separation of beach sand minerals.

(c)(ii) For pure value addition projects as well as integrated projects with value addition upto any intermediate stage foreign equity participation would be permitted upto seventy four percent (74%) through the instrument of joint venture company (ies) with Central/State PSUs such that the independent equity holding of at least one PSU is not less than twenty six per cent (26%) of the total equity.

(c)(iii) In exceptional cases where foreign equity participation above seventy four per cent (74%) is unavoidable, approval will be subject to the clearance of the Atomic Energy Commission.

(d) All cases of foreign direct investment in activities relating to exploitation of beach sand minerals, whether or not such minerals per se are notified as prescribed substances under

the provisions of the Atomic Energy Act, will continue to be processed for approval and regulated in accordance with *all other quidelines. norms, stimulations,* etc., of the Central Government (Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Finance, etc.) and the Reserve Bank of India, *to the extent that these other quidelines, etc., are not inconsistent with the quidelines detailed in this policy.*

(d)(i) While the procedures for and approval requirements of industrial projects, as generally laid down by the Central Government from time to time, will be also applicable to industrial projects for exploitation of beach sand minerals, prior consultation with and securing concurrence of the Department of Atomic Energy (by the nodal Ministry/ Department of the Central/State Government concerned dealing with/ piloting the relevant proposals for such industrial projects) will be necessry wherever such projects involve minerals which are either notified as prescribed substances or are produced alongwith other prescribed substances under the Atomic Energy Act, 1962.

(e) The provisions of the Atomic Energy Act and the Rules and Orders thereunder will continue to apply to the exploitation of beach sands minerals, including their import/export, to the extent such minerals are notified as prescribed substances and require licensing under the said provision. The mining leases under the Mines and Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act will continue to be granted by the State Governemnt(s) concerned.

(f) All cases of foreign direct investment in activities relating to exploitation of beach sand minerals, whether or not such minerals per se are notified as prescribed substances under the provisions of the Atomic Energy Act, will continue to be processed for approval and regulated in accordance with all other guidelines, norms, stipulations, etc., of the Central Governemnt (Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Finance, etc.) and the Reserve Bank of India, to the extent that these other guidelines, etc., are not inconsistent with the guidelines detailed in this policy.

Non-Operational Telephone Exchanges in Rural Areas

1276. SHRI M. VENKAIAN NAIDU: Will the MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that so many telephone exchanges in rural areas have not been functioning for want of additional equipment;

(b) if so, whether the Department of Telecommunications are going to allocate the requisite equipment to those Telecom Circles to put the exchanges to optimum utilisation; and

(c) by when all the exchanges can be made fully operational/funcational?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINSTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) No, Sir. There is no such telephone exchange which is not functioning for want of additional equipment.

However, there are some temporary problems in a few cases in rural ares in case of prolonged power failures.

(b) and (c) Steps are taken by the Department to strengthen the stand-by power system by way of providing generators.

Internet Policy for Private ISPS

1277. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
DR. B. B. DUTTA:
SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA:
SHRI GURUNDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have announced the Internet policy for private Internet Services Providers (ISPs);